

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDGI		X		
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8	DDS&T				
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14	D/OLL	X			
15	D/PAO				
16	SA/IA				
17	AO/DCI				
18	C/IPD/OIS				
19	NIO				
20	D/LA/DO		X		
21	C/CATF/DO		X		
22	C/EPs/DO		X		
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Remarks

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Healthy Exiles Implicated in Salvadoran Bishop's Death CIA Intelligence Chief Levels Allegations

By Don Oberdorfer
Washington Post Staff Writer

The assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero five years ago was carried out by former Nicaraguan national guardsmen directed by Col. Ricardo Lau, who became chief of intelligence for the CIA-backed rebels fighting against the Sandinista government, former Salvadoran security official charged yesterday.

Col. Roberto Santivanez, who is head of El Salvador's central intelligence agency in 1978-79, said at a Washington news conference that Lau had been paid \$120,000 in connection with Romero's assassination by wealthy Salvadoran exiles on March 27, 1980, three days after the killing.

The killing of Romero, who was

among the most popular and important figures in El Salvador at the time, was a key event in polarizing the political situation in that country. Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte has said the government is investigating the widely discussed crime, but no results of the investigation have been announced.

Santivanez gave interviews to several news organizations and about two dozen members of Congress a year ago recounting his inside knowledge of death squad activity in El Salvador, but at the time insisted that his name not be used for fear of reprisals.

His revelations caused an immediate stir even without use of his name.

There was a further stir when it



COL. ROBERTO SANTIVANEZ

... appears at news conference

was learned that Santivanez had been promised \$50,000 as living expenses by critics of U.S. policy in Central America.

Bruce Cameron, a former congressional aide who helped arrange Santivanez's original testimony, said he actually received \$32,500.

See LATIN, A28, Col. 1

■ U.S. planning its largest military exercise in Honduras. Page A28

Detail Offered On Bishop's Assassination

LATIN, From A1

Santivanez said yesterday that "money was not my motivation" but that funds were essential to support his life and travel.

The news conference yesterday, sponsored by an independent filmmaker who is releasing a documentary on Santivanez, came as the administration is preparing a large-scale effort to persuade Congress to reverse its cutoff of secret funding for the anti-Sandinista insurgents.

Beyond his charge against Lau, which was not mentioned in his remarks last year—Santivanez's news conference was notable for its description of the links between various Central American rightist officials and groups in connection with the Salvadoran death squads.

According to Santivanez, the decision to kill the archbishop was made by Miami-based Salvadoran capitalists "who gave the money" and was passed along inside El Salvador by Roberto D'Aubuisson, a former major in the security service who has since become a prominent figure in Salvadoran politics.

The killing was planned in Guatemala, according to Santivanez, and carried out by "two ex-Somoza [Nicaragua] national guardsmen working with a Salvadoran National Guard team."

Santivanez did not name Lau, who had been an intelligence officer and field commander for former Nicaraguan president Anastasio Somoza, as one of the archbishop's killers.

Santivanez said that, on the basis of a captured "diary" of death squad activity and "several other sources," Lau played "a key role" in training

the death squads and was paid for Romero's assassination.

Lau was later chief of intelligence for the "September 15 Legion," one of the earliest paramilitary organizations fighting against the leftist Sandinista government that took over Nicaragua after Somoza's fall.

After the formation in August 1981 of the Democratic Front of Nicaragua (FDN), the umbrella group for the anti-Sandinista fight, Lau was its first chief of intelligence.

Secret Central Intelligence Agency support for the FDN and other elements of the "secret war" against the Sandinistas was authorized by President Reagan in November 1981.

Lau was forced out of the FDN intelligence post about September 1982, reportedly on CIA instructions, but has been described as taking an unofficial role in FDN counterintelligence as late as last year.

Bosco Matamoros, Washington representative of the FDN, said Lau at present has "no connection in any capacity" with the anti-Sandinista organization.

Matamoros said "we have no knowledge" that Lau had a role in the assassination of Romero, an act which Matamoros described as "condemnable."

Santivanez was removed from his post as chief of the Salvadoran national intelligence agency, ANSESAL, as a result of the October 1979 coup that brought a reformist group of military officers to power. In the following months, including the period of Romero's assassination, Santivanez was residing in Guatemala, where he said the assassination was planned.

Guatemala had been a haven for right-wing exiles following the fall of Somoza in July 1979 and the reformist coup in El Salvador in October that year. Santivanez said he had spoken at the time with hired assassins who made frequent flights from Guatemala into El Salvador to kill people selected for assassination.

Officers of the Old National Guard Remain a Factor in the Rebel Forces

Some Contra Leaders Are Their Own Worst Enemies

By JAMES LEMOYNE

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Less than a year after the Sandinistas seized power in Nicaragua in 1979, 60 exiled officers of the defeated National Guard met in Guatemala. With little hope of success, some of them recall, they vowed to drive out the Sandinistas.

Today, more than 12,000 guerrillas are involved in the battle. Most of them march under the banner of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, which has received most of the \$80 million reportedly provided to insurgents by the Central Intelligence Agency. While their foot soldiers are mainly peasants angered by Sandinista policies, almost all the top commanders are former National Guard officers. Their influence and unclear political aims have become issues in the Congressional debate on continuing aid. Last week, vigorously supporting the guerrillas' struggle, President Reagan asserted that Congress must decide whether the United States would keep "trying to help people who had a Communist tyranny imposed on them by force, deception and fraud."

Originally trained by American Marines, the National Guard defended the ruling Somoza family for more than 40 years. By 1979 and the Sandinista-led revolution, many Nicaraguans identified the Guard with corruption and brutality. Now, as rebel leaders, some former guardsmen have proved capable. Others, however, have been accused of crimes including murder and stealing from the C.I.A. A rival guerrilla leader, Edén Pastora, refuses to join forces because, he says, the National Guardsmen could not win popular support at home.

Their supreme military commander, Col. Enrique Bermudez, was the Somoza Government's last military attaché in Washington where, a former associate says, he cemented ties to the C.I.A. At his base on the Honduran-Nicaraguan border, new recruits drill awkwardly in ill-fitting boots. Colonel Bermudez said in an interview that he was fighting the "Sandinocommunist system," to create a pluralistic democracy. But rebel fighters appear to receive little political instruction and say their only goal is to destroy the Sandinistas in a war that Colonel Bermudez depicts as part of the struggle between Moscow and Washington. Critics argue that the National Guard officers' experience in defending the Somoza casta doubt on their commitments now. These officers, Colonel Bermudez replies, make up only 1 percent of the rebel army and have been unfairly stigmatized. "I don't think you can judge all by the plan of the few," he said.

Their numbers may be small, but their influence appears to be great. Under Colonel Bermudez, the heads of logistics, intelligence, training, operations, special forces and most of the largest combat units are Guard veterans. Many company commanders are former National Guard enlisted men. And two influential rebel civilian officials, Enrique and Afisides Sanchez, were large landowners who backed the Somoza.

After a rebel command shakeup in 1983, several former Guard officers departed under a cloud. Honduran military officials say they suspect Col. Ricardo Lau, until recently the head of rebel counterintelligence, of involvement in the disappearance or killing of at least 18 Hondurans and 80 Salvadoran leftists since 1981. According to Edgar Chamorro Coronel, who was dismissed as a civil-

ian director of the Nicaragua Democratic Force five months ago for publicly criticizing the rebels, other commanders threatened to kill Colonel Lau at a meeting in December 1983. The C.I.A. station chief was called in to mediate, Mr. Chamorro said. Mr. Lau could not be reached for comment. The C.I.A. has declined to comment on reports of its operations in Central America. Mr. Bermudez said he had heard many charges against Mr. Lau, once a close aide, but had seen no evidence to support them. Last week, Col. Roberto Santiváñez, a former director of intelligence in El Salvador, said he had seen documents indicating that Colonel Lau had "received payment of \$120,000 for arranging" the assassination in 1980 of El Salvador's Archbishop, Oscar Arnulfo Romero. Colonel Santiváñez was dismissed as Salvadoran consul in New Orleans; some members of Congress and other Americans raised about \$35,000 for his expenses.

The rebel chief of staff, Emilio Echaverry, retired last year. He was accused of stealing large amounts of C.I.A. money, according to Mr. Chamorro and Capt. Armando Lopez, head of logistics. C.I.A. agents seeking the missing money forced several rebels to take lie detector tests, Mr. Chamorro said. A former National Guard ser-



Col. Enrique Bermudez

geant who became a top combat commander, using the nom de guerre "Suicide," was executed in 1983 along with two other Guard shamals. Mr. Bermudez said they had "mis-treated civilians." Another rebel official said they had been accused of robbery, rape and murder.

Worried about the guardsmen's reputation, the C.I.A. appointed a new seven-member National Directorate in late 1982, primarily to meet journalists and Congressmen, according to Mr. Chamorro and another senior rebel official. Colonel Bermudez and his aides continued to run the military, Mr. Chamorro added. "We used the Argentines, the C.I.A. and the Guard," he said. "How do you create a democratic army out of that?" Other rebel officials reply that the National Guard officers have the same right to fight as any other Nicaraguan exile and that their military experience is needed. However, a

Western official said that at first, the former officers relied unsuccessfully on conventional military tactics, which they had learned as cadets. Now, threatened with the loss of American assistance, the Guard officers face the challenge of waging guerrilla war, which requires broad popular support. On present evidence, it is not clear if they can make the transition.